

Roosevelt Base, Swimming Pool
(Building No. 233)

Reeves Avenue, enclosed by Building No. 22 and the Arcade
~~Naval Base Long Beach~~

Long Beach
Los Angeles
California

HABS No. CA-2663-G

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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Western Region
Department of the Interior
San Francisco, California 94107

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

ROOSEVELT BASE, SWIMMING POOL (Building No. 233)

HABS No. CA-2663 -G

Location: Reeves Avenue, enclosed by Building 22 and the Arcade 234, Naval Station Long Beach,
Long Beach, Los Angeles County, California

USGS Long Beach Quadrangle (7.5'), Universal Transverse Mercator Coordinates: 11.384840.3735210

Significance: The Roosevelt Base Historic District, constructed in 1940-1943, consists of 11 buildings designed in the International Style with Mediterranean Revival detailing, five structures, and extensive historic landscaping. It is eligible for the National Register for its site planning, landscaping, and architectural style; and for its Associate Architect Paul Williams, a nationally prominent Los Angeles Afro-American architect. Additionally, the District is significant for its association with the buildup of permanent Naval facilities on the Pacific Coast under President Franklin D. Roosevelt, during the mobilization period preceding the United States' entry into World War II.

The Swimming Pool built for the enlisted men is significant as an original part of the recreational facilities designed for the Pacific Fleet personnel.

Description: This rectangular 60' x 120' swimming pool is made of smooth concrete, painted white, with a gunnite surface on its 12" lipped rim and surrounding deck. The pool is 4 feet deep in the east section, 5 feet deep in the center, and 12 feet deep in the west section. There are two diving boards on the west side, and six aluminum ladders, three per side, on the north and south sides. The original concrete diving board bases, resembling streamlined gun emplacements, remain although the boards have been replaced and railings added. There are two lifeguard chairs, one located at the southwest deck and one at the east side of the pool. Four large square brick planters are on the east side of the pool. The south side of the pool has a wall of wooden enclosure panels and metal gates separating the pool deck from the arcade, Building 234. A 15' x 26' metal cabana extending from the ridge of the Arcade's eaves to the swimming pool deck provides shade in an otherwise fully-exposed swimming pool area.

Alterations. The original tiles inside the pool were covered with a fiberglass lining in the 1980s. The high dive was removed between 1969 and 1974. The deck of the pool has been resurfaced with gunnite. A new wall of wooden enclosure panels and metal gates separating the Swimming Pool area from the Arcade was added. A 15'-x-26' metal

cabana was added at the south side of the pool to provide shade. A raised spa was added at the southeast corner of the pool area, behind a two-wall brick enclosure.

Surroundings. The Swimming Pool 233 is surrounded on the east and west by Building 22. On the north side is a small arcade, similar to the main Arcade 234, which serves as the only entrance to the pool. The arcade has a wide concrete landing with shallow steps and metal pipe railings, leading to Reeves Avenue. On the south side is the main Arcade 234.

Historical Context: The enlisted men's swimming pool, built in 1941, was part of a plan to provide recreational and administrative facilities for the Pacific Fleet anchored in San Pedro Harbor. The construction of this complex was part of a nation-wide military effort to replace deteriorating World War I temporary buildings with new permanent facilities to attract and retain post-war peacetime forces. Rather than using a standard design from the Bureau of Yards and Docks, the Navy, through Allied Engineers, hired local civilian architects Adrian Wilson and Paul R. Williams. As a result the buildings, designed in the International Style with Mediterranean Revival details, are unique to the Base.

Construction of this complex, named Roosevelt Base, took place between 1940 and 1943, and cost \$18 million, funded by Congressional appropriations. Included were the gymnasium (23), squash/handball courts and locker rooms (22), a swimming pool (233), tennis courts (221), arcade (234), lounge and bowling alley (20), officers' club (24), fleet landing building (10), administration building (1), dispensary (2), fire station (3), central heating plant (4), labor board building (41), gatehouse (40), main gates (gate 1), a net pier (pier 7, structure 126), and extensive landscaping.

Although designed in 1940 as recreation facilities for personnel of the Pacific Fleet, the complex was not used initially for this purpose. In response to Japan's increasing belligerence toward China, President Roosevelt, (for whom the Base was named) ordered the fleet from San Pedro Bay to Pearl Harbor, Oahu, Hawaii to serve as a deterrence and warning. After the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor, the Base was rushed to completion; new temporary barracks were constructed, and the facilities were used during World War II as support for a Small Craft Training Center and as the administrative center of the Naval Operating Base in Long Beach.

After World War II the facilities, renamed Naval Station Long Beach, were used to support the U.S. Navy ships' personnel either homeported in Long Beach or in drydock for repairs at the adjacent Naval Shipyard. In 1991 the Naval Station was listed for closure as part of the national Base Re-Use and Closure activities as the Department of Defense down-

sized at the end of the Cold War. In 1994 the Base officially closed, although a number of buildings are still in use.

Sources:

A microfilm copy of architectural drawing #1248-34-214, dated May 15, 1941, is located at Building 20, Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Construction Battalion Center, Port Hueneme, California.

Archiplan Urban Design Collaborative. 1987. *Terminal Island Long Beach Naval Complex, Long Beach, California: Update of Engineering Evaluation for Naval Station: Long Beach, California*. Revised April 1988, Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Long Beach Naval Station. Contract N624-86-C-5263.

Manley, William, Carson Anderson, and Susan M. Hector. 1994. *Historical and Architectural Assessment - Naval Station Long Beach, Long Beach, California*. San Diego, California. Contract Number N68711-92-M-4893.

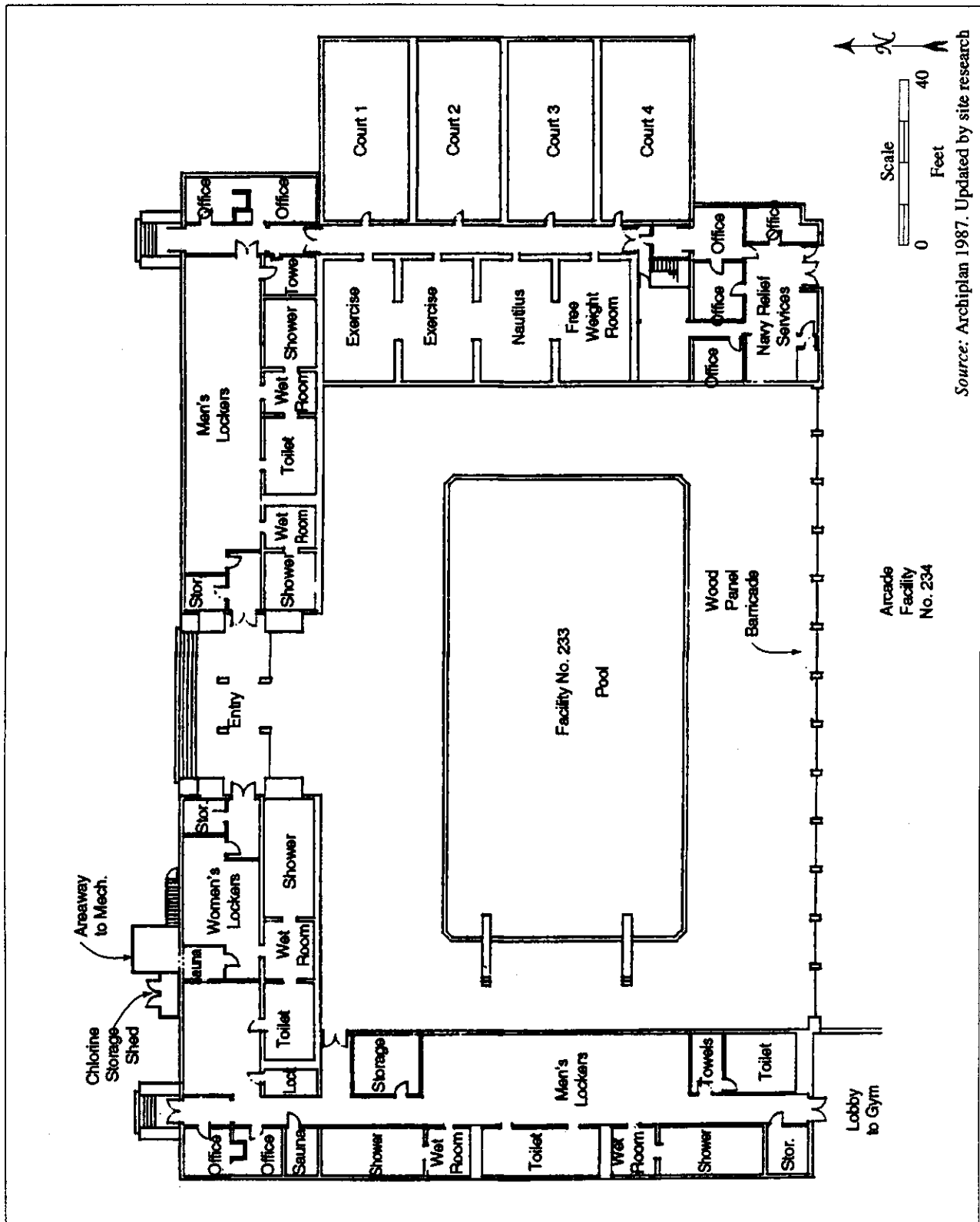
Property Record Card: NAV. S. and A. Form 277

"Roosevelt Naval Base, Terminal Island: Headquarters of The Naval Operating Base, Terminal Island, Long Beach Harbor." 1944. *Architectural Record* May: 58-70.

Todd Erickson. Interview with Alexandra C. Cole, 29 March 1996, Naval Station Long Beach, Long Beach, California.

Project Information: This HABS documentation project was undertaken as a mitigative recording required by the Memorandum of Agreement, dated _____ 1996, signed by the City of Long Beach, the California State Preservation Officer and the Navy. The Navy proposes to transfer the Naval Station property to the City of Long Beach. The City, through the Port of Long Beach, plans to demolish all the buildings and structures on Roosevelt Base for a container terminal.

The documentation was prepared by Alexandra C. Cole, SAIC, Santa Barbara, architectural historian and Fermina B. Murray, historian, in May 1996. Large-format photography was done by William B. Dewey of Santa Barbara, California, in April 1996.



LAYOUT OF BUILDING 233. 1996